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STATE FOR NEA/ARP

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KPAL](#) [IS](#) [KU](#) [NATIONAL ASSEMBLY](#)
SUBJECT: FIVE MPS SUBMIT LEGISLATION TO BAN ALL CONTACTS
WITH ISRAEL

REF: KUWAIT 22

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¶1. (SBU) Five parliamentarians - two Shi'a Islamists, two Sunni Islamists, and one populist - submitted draft legislation March 3 calling for a complete ban on all Kuwaiti interaction, both official and unofficial, with "the Zionist entity" (i.e. Israel). The bill "seeks to prohibit government agencies, individuals, and companies from traveling to Israel, striking agreements with the Jewish state, and holding meetings with Israelis," local press reported. It would also prohibit "the opening of Israeli offices (in Kuwait) under any pretext, directly or indirectly." Violators would be subject to prison sentences of between three and ten years and fines of up to 5,000 KD (\$17,285). (Note: Kuwait adheres to, but does not strictly enforce, the Arab League's primary economic boycott of Israel. End note.)

¶2. (SBU) The legislation was proposed by Adnan Abdul Samad and Ahmed Lari from the National Islamic Alliance (NIA), an Iran-leaning Shi'a political association; Dr. Nasser Al-Sane from the Islamic Constitutional Movement (ICM), the political arm of the Kuwaiti Muslim Brotherhood; Ahmed Baqer from the Salafi Islamic Grouping (SIG), a conservative Islamist political association; and Musallam Al-Barrak, an outspoken member of the Popular Action Bloc, a populist opposition bloc in Parliament to which Samad and Lari also belong. The MPs cited "Israel's continuing refusal to implement international resolutions, 'barbaric' aggression against Palestinians, savage destruction of Lebanon last summer," and Israeli excavations near the Al-Aksa mosque as justification for submitting the legislation. The bill would still need approval from Parliament and the Government before going into effect.

¶3. (SBU) Comment: If the bill comes to a vote before Parliament, the entire 17-member Islamic Bloc and the seven-member Popular Action Bloc would likely support it, as would at least some of the Independent Bloc, a 12-member, pro-Government alliance of primarily Sunni tribal MPs, suggesting it could get the 33 votes needed to pass. This legislation is yet another public relations effort by Islamists to garner political support by defending popular issues and putting pressure on the Government to toe a more conservative line on sensitive foreign policy issues, possibly in reaction to recent media reports about contacts between Israel and Qatar. It also evidences continued cooperation between Sunni Islamists and Iran-leaning Shi'a on issues where their views coincide. End comment.

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